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BRITISH COLUMBIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

February 1940

Officers and executive for 1939-40.

Honorary President	-	Hon. G.M. Weir
President	-	Dr. W. Kaye Lamb
Past President	-	Mr. E.S. Robinson
Vice-President	-	Mrs. Nina Napier
Secretary	-	Mrs. Adelaide Shaw
Treasurer	-	Miss J. Bramley

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS The executive met at the Provincial Library on January 8. As Mr. Grossman had been compelled to resign as Secretary of the Association, owing to the fact that he has been called up for military service, the Executive agreed to ask Mrs. Adelaide Shaw, of the Victoria Public Library, to assume the office for the balance of the year. Mrs. Shaw has accepted the position.

The place and date of the annual convention were considered at length, and it was decided finally to hold the convention in Victoria on Monday, April 15. It was felt that this date is sufficiently far from Easter not to interfere with the holidays at that time, and that Monday would be a more convenient day than Friday or Saturday, as the latter is such a busy day in public libraries.

It was also decided that the various Committees would be asked to have their reports in the hands of the Secretary by March 15, in order that they may be included in the next number of the Bulletin, which will give full details regarding the convention. The Executive thought that it would be a great advantage if every member could have an opportunity to read the Committee reports both at their leisure and before the convention, as this would both prepare and clear the way for discussion, the lack of which has been deplored on many occasions.

The Treasurer reported a balance on hand of $170.23. The Contributing membership to the A.L.A. was ordered paid.

CHECK LIST Mr. Weston's checklist of the publications of the government of British Columbia from 1871 to 1938 will be ready for distribution by the end of the month. It will consist of about 165 pages, and the price will be $2.00. Judging from the page proofs, the King's Printer has made a very attractive job of it.

FRASER VALLEY UNION LIBRARY

On December 16th the taxpayers of Langley Municipality voted to withdraw from the Fraser Valley Union Library District. This is the first break since the district was constituted in 1934. The municipal council took immediate steps to maintain uninterrupted library service for the first three months of 1940; and during this time the Langley District Library Council, an unofficial organization made up of representatives from twenty-six local readers' committees in the municipality, will take steps to reverse the decision. There is therefore hope that there may not be a final break in library service to Langley, but the issue is far from certain. Although there was a good deal of misunderstanding amongst electors as to the question that they were asked to vote on, there is no belying the existence of a very definite, even an organized, opposition to the library. The following may be listed as amongst the principal elements in the situation.

(1) Repeated changes made by the Langley Municipal Council from year to year in the method of levying its library tax. The last and worst method used in 1939 is generally conceded to have "put the skids under the library." A flat rate of seventy-five cents was levied on all residents between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, and this was collected, along with the road-tax, poll-tax, and dog-tax, by a tax-collector going from house to house.

(2) Staunch objection of many taxpayers, under any circumstances, to a levy for a service which they do not use. Well-established as this principle of taxation may be, as in the case of schools, roads, and public services, Langley taxpayers are nevertheless very much worked up over this new annoyance that has been brought so brazenly to their very doors. The public library idea is still relatively new in the community, and there are still some of the residents who pass as intelligent citizens and nevertheless think that the library should be financed entirely by those who actually use it.

(3) Existence of quite a large foreign-born population, a large proportion of whom are in poor economic circumstances. They are fertile ground for the anti-library agitator. Incidentally, the leader of the opposition is a member of the school board.

(4) The ease and speed with which it is possible for the opposition to throw its monkey-wrench into the machinery. A petition signed by ten per cent of the electors (310 people out of a total population of about 6,000) asking for a plebiscite "on the library question", was presented about two weeks before the municipal election, at which time the electors were asked to vote on "withdrawal from the union library district." A straight majority decides the question. With similar referendum powers in the wards of a city, and with taxation as above, how many city libraries would survive the healing knife?

The problem in essence is that of persuading a "democratically operated" community to take advantage of, and continuously to support, an educational institution, when there is reason to doubt that a majority of the electorate, or even an effective minority, is educated to this educational need. A very flexible system of taxation has been thought necessary in order to bring together a sufficiently large number of municipalities and rural school districts to form a union library district in the first place. Once constituted, the district is endangered by this very flexibility. Where, by good judgment or good fortune, library costs are being paid out of general revenue, not a peep is heard from the taxpayer. Experimentation in the "fairer" methods of taxation has proved disastrous.

Some are so optimistic as to welcome the adverse votes in the Fraser and Okanagan Valleys as having the effect of bringing certain weakness to the surface, and of bringing home to supporters of the institution of public library service the importance of regional library development in rural British Columbia. On the other hand, one might well have hoped that these comparatively young organizations should have been spared such heavy body blows until better entrenched. In any case, the various problems of the union libraries are being given very careful consideration by the proper authorities, and many of them will doubtless be solved.

More cheerful news is to be found in the annual report for 1939. Circulation reached a record high of 260,676, as compared with 246,901 in 1938. Book requests increased from 12,635 to 14,154. Eleven new library agencies were established during the year, bringing the total now to one hundred and seventy-one. The library district itself was increased by the inclusion of the important rural school district of Nicomen Island. Thanks to the invaluable support of the Provincial Government, the book stock was increased by 600 volumes to a net total of 32,251, although 3,697 books fell to the scythe of Father Time.

OKANAGAN UNION LIBRARY

Nine units have voted in favour of withdrawal from the Okanagan Union Library. They are the rural school districts of Mara, Hillcrest, Sicamous and Eagle Valley, the municipalities of Coldstream, Spillumacheen and Salmon Arm, and the cities of Vernon and Armstrong. These withdrawals constitute a serious challenge to the Union Library districts, and the Public Library Commission is canvassing the whole situation most carefully, with a view to ascertaining what changes in legislation and policy seem desirable. Meanwhile we are happy to say that the Okanagan Union Library will be able to carry on despite the loss of some of its largest component parts.

VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Victoria Public Library reports that it has increased its service to the Forces, not only to the men stationed within the city limits but also to those in neighboring districts who are in camp. They are using the library a great deal and the majority of them seem to be studying rather than reading for recreation.

On December 16, 1939 the Victoria Public Library celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary, for it was on December 16, 1864 that the Mechanics Institute in Victoria opened a library and reading room as a result of several years' campaigning. There the leading American and Colonial papers and those of other countries were on file, and there was a collection of 475 books. Later on, the Institute moved to Fort and Government Streets and finally to the Philharmonic Building on Fort Street, where Devonshire House is now. The income of the Institute was derived from fees of $1 a month, $10 a year, or $50 for a life membership, augmented by funds raised at annual picnics.

The growth of the library was remarkable, but notwithstanding, by 1886 the Institute was in serious financial difficulties, and offered the book collection of over four thousand volumes to the city as the nucleus of a free public library. As the sum of $450 was involved it was necessary for the council to put a bylaw before the people, which included clauses permitting the establishment of a free public library under the control of the Council. The bylaw lost,

but Mr. James Fell, a staunch friend of the Library, made himself personally responsible for the sum involved rather than let the books be scattered by auction.

In 1889 the City took over the Library, but in the next 9 years it became impossible to carry on the work with insufficient funds, and first steps were taken towards securing a Carnegie grant. A bylaw was passed in 1902 accepting Mr. Carnegie's gift and guaranteeing to provide a site and annual maintenance. The cornerstone was laid in 1904, and the new building opened to the public in 1906. About four thousand books were moved into the building which was built to hold fifteen thousand volumes.

It was in 1912, when Miss Helen Stewart was appointed Librarian, that the work of reorganizing the Library along modern lines was commenced. The open shelf system, the Dewey decimal classification and the card catalogue were introduced by Miss Stewart. Separate Reference and Juvenile departments were opened; and an apprentice class established in which students were trained for Junior positions in this and other libraries.

Dr. Stewart resigned in 1924 and the present Librarian, Miss Margaret Clay, was appointed.

The celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary.

In the morning a ceremony was held in the Reference Department, presided over by W.T. Straith, M.L.A., Chairman of the Library Board. Mayor Andrew McGavin spoke briefly on behalf of the city and Dr. Kaye Lamb, provincial librarian and archivist, represented Dr. Weir, Provincial Secretary. Canon Robert Connell of Victoria, immediate past chairman of the Library Board, spoke on the subject, "The Library within the community."

Members of past Boards, now resident in the city, were present. Those connected with the early staffs who took part in the birthday celebration were Misses Gladys and Norah Hewlings, Mrs. N.M. McGregor, and Mrs. William Oliphant, Mrs. M.M. Godson, Dr. Helen Stewart, and Miss Mary Stewart.

Out of town guests present were Mr. C.W. Smith, librarian of the University of Washington library, Seattle; Mr. John Ridington, librarian of the University of British Columbia library; Mr. E.S. Robinson, librarian of the Vancouver Public Library; Mr. H.L. Lidster, chairman of the Public Library Commission of B. C.; and Mr. H.L. Corey, chairman of the Vancouver Public Library Board. Greetings were received from Mr. J.T. Jennings, librarian of the Seattle Public Library; Miss Nell Unger, librarian of the Library Association of Portland; and Mrs. Gladys Puckett, president of the Pacific Northwest Library Association.

After the ceremony, and throughout the day, members of the Library Staff conducted groups of guests through the library. The heads of the various departments spoke briefly of their particular branch of Library service. Miss Pollock, in the Reference Department, had on display some valuable books on the history of the Pacific Northwest. Miss King told of her work in the Children's Department and with the schools. The Circulation Department was a familiar place to everyone, and here the assistants were prepared to answer any questions about the borrowing of books, and registration. In the Cataloguing Department, Mrs. Napier gave the guests some idea of the work that goes on behind scenes, before the books are ready for circulation. People who had no knowledge of library work were par-

ticularly interested in this Department, for very few of them had realized the work that is done in making the books easily available. Everyone was interested, too, in the Order and Mending Departments, neither of which is open to the Public ordinarily. Miss Pearson told the guests of her work in ordering the books and preparing them for the Cataloguing Department. Miss Bristow, in the Mending Department, had on display several books showing different kinds of damage done through the wear and tear of circulation, and the methods of mending. Our guests were truly shocked to see the amount of damage done to books in constant use. As the Assistants brought the tour of the Library to a close, they presented their guests with bookmarks as souvenirs of the Library's 75th Anniversary. Each bookmark contained a brief history of the Library, the earliest statistics of the number of borrowers and the book stock and the present statistics; and a brief list of suggested titles. "Any book is a new book, until you have read it" was our parting suggestion to the reading public.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

As another year ends, we stop to consider what progress we have made and are forced to admit reluctantly that we are practically where we were a year ago. True, our book stock, after many setbacks, has finally climbed above the 100,000 mark, but we were within sight of that seven years ago. The number of borrowers is about the same but circulation figures show a drop of about 12,500, nearly all of it in adult fiction. This is largely attributable to unsettled conditions and the outbreak of war last fall, when it became obvious that few people were interested in borrowing books or visiting the library. Gradually however they have begun to come back, though it was not until almost the end of the year that the circulation became anything like normal. On the other hand the number of reference questions answered shows more than a 5% increase.

We have one interesting development to report. At the request of the Provincial Supervisor, Tuberculosis social service, the Vancouver Public Library is to organize and operate what is to be virtually a branch library in the T.B. unit. Their existing book collection of some two hundred volumes and certain expected donations of used books of the better type are to be turned over to the library together with what money is available for new books. The ordering and preparation of the books, including cataloguing, will be done at the library. In addition, provision has been made for a part-time librarian who will be employed by the library and be under library supervision. The money which will be available for the purchase of new books is being contributed by the Kwannon club.

Believe it or not, the Vancouver Public Library recently received a renewal letter, the envelope of which was addressed as follows:

"Vancouver Public Library
The Carnegie one ... the big one
Vancouver"

NELSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Nelson public library reports as follows: "We seem to have recovered this last year from the shock of moving from the old, inconvenient but more central quarters, and circulation picked up quite a bit. The room itself is beginning to look very attractive; it is large, 60 x 40',

with six very big windows on two sides. These windows were hung with monkscloth curtains in the summer, which helps against the too-bright sun, and also softens the harsh walls (which walls we have some hopes of calsomining this coming spring, if the war does not upset our budget).

After a more-than-two-years' struggle, we achieved a sign, and now display a handsome bronze plate by the street door. Below it we put a glass-fronted poster case (like the theatre ones) where we can post book-jackets, or anything likely to catch the eye of passers-by.

But the real excitement has been our radio broadcasts. CKLN was established here in July, and in September we began a series of fifteen minute weekly broadcasts. The manager, Mr. Lethbridge, and his staff have been most courteous and helpful, and we enjoy these although they do take a great deal of time and effort. In order to dodge importunate folk, we are "sponsored" as a public service programme by the local "Daily News" paper. For the most part, these programmes consist of book-reviews but we have varied them - once with a "Reference" play, with a special "History of the Book" during Book week, and anything else that may interest listeners and be a help to us. While CKLN can relay Canadian broadcasts now, we ourselves have not yet attained anything more than local fame, and so are unheard outside of the district! But the response seems to be gratifying, and we are carrying on the programmes until the late spring in any case.

I must not forget to mention a very attractive panel that our assistant, Miss Kathleen Nisbet, painted in show-card colours on wood for us. We had long hankered after an "Alice in Wonderland" mural, and she has now made us one, 7 1/2 ft x 3 1/2 ft, and it hangs most cheerfully above the children's books.

The children's chairs, and several odd pieces of furniture, we had painted a lively blue; the rim of the "Alice" mural is of the same blue paint, and the whole picture picks up the colours about the room and makes a unit out of a hitherto haphazard colour effect.

NEW WESTMINSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY The New Westminster Public Library reports the "appointment of Rev. W. B. Willan to the Library Board. Mr. Willan is an outstanding citizen and we all feel that he is a very welcome addition to the Board."

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. The next bulletin of the Extension dept. to be published immediately will take the form of a catalogue of the books in the Extension library, completely annotated and classified.

The Dramatic department of the University extension service under the direction of Miss Dorothy Somerset has made great progress during the past year. A library of approximately 700 plays has been established to serve the amateur dramatic groups in the province. To date, there are seventy or more groups reading and producing plays.

One American publisher and one agent are cooperating with the U.B.C.

Library in the matter of American exchange. In each case the Library pays 6% instead of the current 12 %. We were interested recently to receive an invoice from a French firm, giving the amounts in dollars or "in other currencies the dollar equivalent." To Europeans the only dollars are American dollars. This publisher is going to be surprised to receive payment in Canadian dollars. We shall not be surprised when we receive another letter from him.

WAR AND THE LIBRARY

It is interesting to note what has been done in England about the question of the importation of German books and periodicals. The following paragraph appeared in the Library Association record of November, 1939.

"The chief problem which has been troubling librarians of University and other research libraries is that of the purchase of German books and continuations of German periodicals. To postpone purchase till the return of peace means that they would have to be procured when so expensive as to be all but unprocurable, and meanwhile to go without the value they contain. We might, and do, sometimes wish them fewer, smaller, and cheaper, but if they were not worth buying we should not have been buying them. Many of them are in fact vital. The Library Association got in touch with the Government about this matter; and, when it seemed possible that obstacles would be put in the way of single libraries or their agents obtaining permits, it was ready to act as a central channel for orders. Difficulties have, however, now subsided, and all that has to be done is to order through a good agent in this country, who will get a permit, and comply with all necessary formalities of customs, censorship, etc."

The following circular received recently by the U.B.C. Library from the well known firm of B.H. Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, shows that the plan is now in operation:

November 27, 1939

Dear Sir or Madam:

His Majesty's government has recognized the needs of scholarship and science for an uninterrupted supply of learned and technical books and periodicals of enemy origin, and have granted us a Licence to import and supply them.

We already have a Licence to import and supply books from allied and neutral countries, and, despite necessary delays, are confident that we shall be able to supply your needs.

Yours faithfully

B.H. Blackwell, Ltd.

The Canadian government has not yet taken such a liberal attitude. Mr. Ridington has applied for a similar ruling for Canadian libraries but a decision has not as yet been reached.

There are two schools of opinion on this question:

(1) Those who object to any commerce with the enemy; (2) Those who think of a library's needs, regardless - always bearing in mind the difficulty of filling gaps at a later date, etc.

The plans for book service for the soldiers are gradually taking shape.

In Victoria a library committee has been organized under the auspices of the Auxiliary Services of the Dept. of National Defence, with a view to co-ordinating and expanding the book services which are at present available to the soldiers and sailors stationed on Vancouver Island. An appeal for books has been made, and it is hoped that the response will be liberal. The Y.M.C.A. has kindly undertaken to act as a collecting centre, and the Committee has been granted office space in which the books may be sorted, listed, and prepared for circulation.

Various organizations and individuals have been gathering books and magazines for the troops in the Victoria area for several months, and many of these have already consented to pool their efforts with those of the Committee. The Committee has no desire whatsoever to interfere with the work of other organizations, and camps already receiving service from another source will be dealt with only when the Committee's book supply will enable it to replace the existing library with a fresh collection of books. In other words, no existing service will be interfered with until it can be improved upon; but it is hoped that eventually all the camps may be served from a single centre.

The Committee consists of Capt. Hobart Molson, representing Capt. Victor MacLean, District Auxiliary Services Officer, Mr. W.T. Straith, M.L.A., Chairman, Miss Marjorie C. Holmes, Secretary, Miss Margaret Clay, Dr. Kaye Lamb, and Mr. Raymond Jones.

In Vancouver the Library committee of the Co-ordinating Council for war work and civilian services in greater Vancouver is under the chairmanship of Mr. E. S. Robinson. The Committee recognize the I.O.D.E. as being responsible for supplying books to troops stationed outside urban centres and are willing to place at their disposal the resources of the Committee so that the central supply of books under the control of the Committee would be available for supplementing the Order's own libraries. The I.O.D.E. is planning a book drive for the week of February 5th. The books collected will be sent to a central depot to be manned by volunteers who will prepare them for circulation and distribution. It is hoped that apart from the books collected, it will be possible to purchase a certain amount of new non-fiction and technical works. In the event of huts being established by the Y.M.C.A. or similar organizations the Committee will offer their facilities for rotating supplies of books.

In this connection it may be of interest to note what is being done by the Toronto Public Library, as reported in the Ontario Library Review of November, 1939. It has opened a War Branch at Exhibition Camp. It is "a real branch library, paid for out of the funds of the Library Board, administered as is any other branch of the system, and operated by trained librarians of the T.P.L. staff, giving their services voluntarily and outside regular staff hours." It is "a carefully selected library of new books bought for the use of this branch and for no other purpose. Two thousand good books, biography, travel, fiction (including, of course, Mein Kampf) all chosen with an eye to giving the greatest possible service, in interest, usefulness and recreation, to men engaged in the stiff job of military training. There will also be periodicals."

RADIO PUBLICITY The Publicity Committee has arranged for a series of ten broadcasts to start early in February. The fifteen-minute programs are designed to show the people of the province what different types of library service are available to them, and will be broadcast from CJOR every Wednesday evening at 7:45 beginning on February 7.

The Vancouver Public Library is planning a series of programs to be broadcast over CKMO. The series, which will start within the next few weeks will consist principally of book reviews and various items of interest concerning books and library service.

LIBRARIANS AS AUTHORS The following articles by British Columbia librarians have appeared in recent library publications:

"Development of library activities for young people" by Miss Isabel McTavish of the Vancouver Public Library, in the Library Journal of Nov. 1, 1939.

"Progress and poverty in the Fraser Valley" by Mr. C.K. Morison, of the Fraser Valley Union Library, in the Library Journal of Oct. 15, 1939.

"Friends of libraries" by Miss J.C. Stockett, of the Vancouver Public Library, in the Ontario Library Review of Nov., 1939.

WANT LIST The Reference Department of the University of British Columbia Library reports that the U.B.C. files lack the following documents which they desire to acquire on a piece to piece basis, or otherwise. The dates given are the dates covered by the report, not the date of publication.

Alberta. University. Dept. of extension. Annual report.
1925/26; 1928/29; 1931/32 - date
B.C. Legislative assembly. Journals of the Legislative assembly.
v. 2, 1873, Parl. 1, sess. 2
B.C. Mental hospitals. Annual report.
1890; 1894; 1901 - 1902; 1906 - 1908; 1910
B.C. Provincial industrial home for girls. Annual report.
1916/17 - 1926 - 27, 4th - 13th report; 1928/29 - 1929/30, 15th - 16th report.
B.C. Provincial industrial school for boys. Annual report.
1st - 18th report, to 1921/22

Vancouver, B.C. City police dept. Annual report.
Any before 1938.
Vancouver, B.C. General hospital. Annual report.
to 1915, 1st - 14th report; 1917, 16th report; 1921 - 1923, 20th-22d report; 1925 - date, 24th - report
Vancouver, B.C. School board. Annual report.
1903 - 1908, 1st - 6th report; 1910 - 1912, 8th - 10th report; 1930, 18th report; 1923, 21st report; 1929 - 1930, 27th-28th report.
Vancouver, B.C. Juvenile court and detention home. Report.
1914, 5th report; 1918 - 1931, 9th - 22d report.

Manitoba. Legislative assembly. Sessional papers.
1884 - 1887; 1917; 1921.

Saskatchewan. Legislative assembly. Journals.
1906 - 1932.

The Periodicals dept. reports that the library would be glad to obtain the following to complete files:

B.C. teacher: V. 1, No. 6, Feb., 1922; no. 9, May 1922; No. 10, June 1922
V. 4, No. 5, Jan. 1925; No. 7, March 1925.
V. 5, No. 1, Sept. 1925; No. 10, June 1926.
Canadian bookman: V. 18, No. 7, July - Aug. 1936; No. 10, Nov. 1936.
V. 19, No. 1, Feb. 1937; No. 4, July 1937; No. 5, Nov. 1937; No. 6, Dec. 1937.
Beaver (Hudson's Bay company) Oct. 1920; Dec. 1925; indexes for Outfits 263 - 265.
Vancouver medical association. Bulletin: V. 13, No. 6, March 1937; V. 15, No. 11, Aug. 1939.

The following is a partial list of U.B.C. duplicates for exchange:

We have files of:	Canada.	Commission of conservation.
	"	Dept. of agriculture
	"	Dept. of the interior. Forest service.
	"	Geological survey

PERSONAL NOTES

Bell - Miss Alice Bell, cataloguer of the Provincial Library, was married on December 30 to Mr. John Mooney of Victoria. She will not be leaving the Library until the spring.

Pearson - Miss Adelaide Pearson, of the Victoria Public Library, was married on December 21 to Mr. T.C. Shaw of Victoria.

The Publicity Committee would like to remind librarians that any library news or personal items which they want to be included in the next Bulletin should be sent to the Chairman of the Committee not later than March 15th.

Please address communications to:
Miss Bessie Greenwood,
Vancouver Public Library,
Vancouver, B. C.